

Support for these claims can be found in the original application as filed. Therefore, no new matter has been added.

Applicant notes with appreciation that claims 11 and 13-15 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include the recitations of their respective base and intermediate claims. To expedite prosecution, these claims have been so rewritten. Specifically, the subject matter of claims 9-11 has been rewritten as new independent claim 16, the subject matter of claims 9, 12 and 13 has been rewritten as independent claim 18, and the subject matter of claims 9 and 15 has been rewritten as independent claim 20. Therefore, Applicant submits that independent claims 16, 18 and 20, as well as dependent claims 17 and 19, should be deemed allowable at the outset. In addition to those claims being allowable, Applicant submits that independent claim 21 patentably defines features of the subject invention.

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection and rejection set forth in the above-noted Office Action.

Claims 9, 10 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,945,239 to Taniguchi. Applicant submits that this patent does not teach many features of the present invention, as previously recited in claims 9, 10 and 12. Therefore, this rejection is respectfully traversed. Nevertheless, claims 9, 10 and 12 having been canceled, Applicant submits that this rejection has become moot and should be withdrawn on this basis as well.

Independent claim 21 recites a projection exposure apparatus that includes an illumination optical system for illuminating a reticle with light from a light source, a projection optical system for projecting an image of the reticle, being illuminated, onto a substrate and an adjuster for adjusting telecentricity of the projection optical system. The illumination optical system includes an optical integrator for defining a plurality of secondary light sources by use of light from the light source, masking means for regulating an illumination region upon the reticle, a first optical system for illuminating the masking means by use of light from the plurality of secondary light sources and a second optical system for collecting light from an opening of the masking means onto the reticle. Also, the first optical system of the illumination optical system includes a lens being movable along an optical axis direction thereby to change the telecentricity, and the adjuster includes a mechanism for moving the lens in the optical axis direction.

Applicant submits that the Taniguchi patent does not teach or suggest such features of the present invention, as recited in independent claim 21. Therefore, Applicant submits that independent claim 21 likewise should be deemed allowable over the cited art.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that the present invention, as recited in independent claims 16, 18, 20 and 21, is patentably defined over the cited art.

Dependent claims 17 and 19 also should be deemed allowable, in their own right, for defining other patentable features of the present invention in addition to those recited in their respective independent claims. Individual consideration of these dependent claims is requested.

Applicant submits that this Amendment After Final Rejection clearly places this application in condition for allowance. This Amendment was not earlier presented because Applicant believed that the prior Amendment placed the application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, entry of the instant Amendment, as an earnest attempt to advance prosecution and reduce the number of issues, is requested under 37 CFR 1.116.

Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the objection and rejection set forth in the above-noted Office Action and an early Notice of Allowance are also requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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